

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /092 W
-----047568 042002Z /66

R 301400Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3687
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SANA 466

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, YE, ET, SO
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GHASHMI ON THE HORN OF AFRICA

1. ON JANUARY 30, PRESIDENT GHASHMI EXPRESSED TO ME GROWING CONCERN ABOUT THE HORN OF AFRICA, PARTICULARLY INCREASING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THAT AREA. HE ASKED SEVERAL TIMES WHY USG IS NOT WILLING TO SUPPORT SOMALIA AT TIME WHEN SOVIET UNION IS GOING ALL OUT IN AIDING THE "ETHIOPIAN MARXIST" REGIME.

2. REPLYING TO MY QUESTION, GHASHMI SAID THAT YEMEN IS SUPPORTING BOTH SOMALIA AND ERITREAN "LIBERATION" FORCES BUT THAT SUPPORT IS MORE SYMBOLIC THAN MATERIAL. HE SAID HE HOPED USG WILL RECONSIDER ITS POLICY ABOUT SOMALIA BECAUSE FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT NOT ONLY IN A SOVIET TAKEOVER OF ETHIOPIA BUT ALSO IN TAKE-OVER OF SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI. SUCH TAKEOVER WOULD
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HAVE DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR ALL MODERATE COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, LIKE EGYPT, SUDAN AND YEMEN, BUT ESPECIALLY SAUDI ARABIA WITH ITS OIL.

3. I EXPLAINED AT SOME LENGTH TO PRESIDENT GHASHMI RATIONALE FOR OUR POLICY TOWARDS SOMALIA, EMPHASIZING USG WANTS TO SEE PROBLEM IN HORN SETTLED PEACEFULLY

WITHOUT INFLUENCE FROM OUTSIDE AND IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT. MOREOVER, U.S. DOES NOT SUPPORT THE FORCIBLE CHANGING OF BOUNDARIES. GHASHMI REPLIED THAT HE RESPECTS US MOTIVES AND IDEALS BUT NOTED THAT SOVIETS ARE NOT APPARENTLY INFLUENCED BY SIMILAR MOTIVES AND IDEALS AND THUS THE DANGER NOT ONLY TO AMERICA'S FRIENDS IN AREA BUT TO AMERICA ITSELF.

4. COMMENT: YEMENIS HAVE LONG BEEN EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT SITUATION IN HORN AND GHASHMI'S COMMENTS ACCURATELY CONVEY BELIEFS OF MOST EDUCATED AND AWARE YEMENIS. THUS, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT YEMEN'S HELP FOR SOMALIA, THOUGH NOT SUBSTANTIAL, MAY WELL BE MORE MATERIAL THAN SYMBOLIC, PARTICULARLY IF RECENT REPORTS ARE TRUE THAT YEMEN IS ALLOWING ITSELF TO ACT AS A TRANSSHIPMENT POINT TO BOTH SOMALIA AND ERITREA. SCOTES

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANA00466
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780054-0634
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978017/aaaaafvh.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f53efce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3784693
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT GAHSHMI ON THE HORN OF AFRICA
TAGS: PEPR, YE, ET, SO, UR, (AL-GHASHMI, AHMED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f53efce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014